

The claims defining the invention are as follows:

1. A support device for a rib between a floor and a roof, the device including:

an expansion means; and

5 a pair of resilient members each having a proximal end adapted for connection to the expansion means and a distal end curved away from the expansion means and adapted for engagement with the floor and roof respectively,

wherein when the device is positioned towards or against the rib and the expansion means is activated to drive the members apart, the member's distal ends are driven substantially vertically into engagement with the floor and the roof and a portion
10 of the device is driven substantially laterally into abutment against the rib.

2. The support device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the expansion means is mechanically operable to selectively permit or inhibit tensioning of the rib support.

3. The support device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the expansion means
15 is hydraulically operable to selectively permit or inhibit tensioning of the rib support.

4. The support device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the distal ends of the resilient members have sawtooth profiles.

5. The support device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the resilient members are made from pre-curved spring steel.

20 6. The support device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the device includes locking means adapted to lock the resilient members in engagement with the floor and roof after activation of the expansion means.

7. The support device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the locking means is fixed to the support device.

25 8. The support device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the locking means is removable from the support device.

9. A support device, the device comprising:

an expander; and

30 a pair of resilient members each having a proximal end adapted for connection to the expander and a distal end curved away from the expander.

10. The support device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the expander is mechanically operable to selectively permit or inhibit tensioning of the rib support.

11. The support device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the expander is hydraulically operable to selectively permit or inhibit tensioning of the rib support.

12. The support device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the distal ends of the resilient members have sawtooth profiles.

13. The support device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the resilient members are made from pre-curved spring steel.

5 14. The support device as claimed in claim 9, wherein the device includes a lock for locking the resilient members in engagement with the floor and roof after activation of the expander.

15. The support device as claimed in claim 14, wherein the lock is fixed to the support device.

10 16. The support device as claimed in claim 14, wherein the lock is removable from the support device.